

# Child and Family Services Update

October 4, 2002

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## Kudos To The DCFS IV-E Eligibility Staff!!!

*From Richard and Jack In Behalf Of Us All!*

Thanks to the dedicated efforts of Cosette Mills and her staff and the eligibility workers in the regions, we passed our first Federal Title IV-E Foster Care Eligibility Review two weeks ago (a new review process established by Federal regulations a couple of years ago). Several other states have failed the review in this first review cycle. Not only did we pass, but the Federal Reviewer from D.C. asked if he could refer other states to us as "the model."

The Federal reviewers had scheduled a full week to review foster care eligibility cases, looking for adherence to Federal regulations in eligibility, placement licensing, and payments. The reviewers indicated that in many states, it's been difficult to complete the entire review process within one week. Due to the excellent preparation by the eligibility team, the review was completed by Wednesday (the reviewers said this was a first) and fewer than 5% of the cases had errors (although in this first review, we were allowed up to 10%).

Thanks goes specifically to: Eastern Region Eligibility -- Arla Jensen, Marsha Sherman, and David Felth; Northern Region Eligibility -- Holly Pope, Phyllis Rogerson, Debbie Lane and Sally Webster; Salt Lake Valley Region Eligibility -- Carly Smith, Angela Hansen, Michelle Mileski, Zlatko Porobic, Doreen Morgan, Carol Johnson, Aimee Porter, and Mary Durfee; Western Region Eligibility -- Jeannie Warner and Linda Moon; Southwest Region Eligibility -- Polly Henderson and Sherrie Misel; and the State Office -- Jeri Jensen, Linda O'Brien, Ruth Johnson, Doug Crockett, Linda Prince, Navina Forsythe, Eric Olson, and Chuck Parsons. Our thanks also to staff from the Office of Licensing who had a part in the success.

## October Is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

*By Richard Anderson and Kate Jensen*

This month we would like to acknowledge and remind everyone that domestic violence needs everyone's attention, from the seemingly small acts of "put downs" to the physical and emotional damage to another human being.

We have been building continually strengthened services for victims, perpetrators, and their children. This development has been a part of a large partnership in our state. From those that have funded and built shelters, to those that deliver treatment, to those that advocate, to those stepping forward and acknowledging that the violence in their families must stop; I send acknowledgement of your greatness in doing what you have done and continue to do each day.

I have been in discussions at national meetings where our statute on domestic violence related child abuse has been questioned. Other states often see this as a threat to the victims of domestic violence. It is difficult for them to see how this has worked out in Utah. The understanding and collaboration that we have developed in Utah has made this a safe way for both the adult and child victims to receive the services they really need. I have explained to those that are concerned that the teamwork of a domestic violence coordinator and a child protective services worker is what makes this work. The two disciplined professionals keep each other supported in creating and implementing the most appropriate interventions. I wish you could see how confidently I address this issue. I can do this because of your good example and effective work.

To all of our staff, to our partners at the shelters, to the treatment providers, and to the parents and children that teach us everyday, I say thanks for continuing to build effective, appropriate, and caring services to those who need the support that we can give.

## Progress On The Case Process Review

*By Linda Winingar*

I have been reviewing the Case Process Review results for this past year. There are some areas where we did quite well, and I wanted to share those with you. There were also some areas where I believe we can make some significant changes next year with a little education. I hope this article can accomplish both objectives.

First, congratulations on some really noteworthy improvements in some areas that are tough to improve in, especially when there is more work to do and fewer workers to do it. **You are all to be commended!** The areas where we met the goal include:

- Conducting the interview outside the presence of the alleged perpetrator.
- Decisions to substantiate based on the facts of the case.
- Reasonable efforts made to locate kin placements.
- Documentation of the nature of the referral in unaccepted referrals.
- Staffing unaccepted referrals with the supervisor or other intake worker (100%!).
- Documentation to support decision not to accept a referral.
- Child's special needs or circumstances taken into consideration in the placement decision.
- Proximity to the child's home taken into consideration in the placement decision.
- Interview the out-of-home provider at least once each month (we met this for all six months!!).
- Visit with the child in out-of-home placement at least once during each month of the review period in months one and five (the other months were very close).
- Visit with the child at least twice during the month (we were at or above the 85% level for the first visit of all six months but not the second visit).

- Visit with the child outside the presence of the out-of-home provider at least once a month (we hit the mark in month five and were within 1% on four other months and 4% on the last month).

Pretty incredible...

The biggest gains we made were in the areas of visits. There were some real substantial changes made. I think that one of the reasons for that was that last year you were made aware that this was an area that was being reviewed.

This year I would like to give you a different kind of information. When we are reviewed on the Case Process many of the questions allow the reviewer to mark that the case is in “partial” compliance. However, when a partial compliance is scored it is counted as a “no.” I would like to explain some of these with the hopes that with only a little effort we can move from a “partial” score to a “yes.”

So here we go. We receive a partial...

### **In CPS**

- If the whereabouts of both parents of the alleged victim are known but only one parent was interviewed.
- If the child was placed in shelter care and the worker visited but not weekly, or the worker visited the child but not in the shelter placement.
- If the worker made reasonable efforts to gather information essential to the child’s safety and well-being but not within 24 hours of placement in shelter care, or the worker obtained the information but did not give it to the shelter placement provider.

### **In Home-Based**

- If the initial Child and Family Plan was completed during the review period but not within 30 days of CPS closure or court order; or **if the plan was completed but there is no signature date.**
- If some but not all of the services identified on the risk assessment are addressed in the initial Child and Family Service Plan.
- If the worker initiated some but not all of the services identified in the Child and Family Plan. (**Initiating services includes identifying service providers and providing addresses and/or phone numbers**—this can be done right in the Child and Family Plan. The information may also be documented in activity logs.)

### **In Foster Care**

- If the worker gave the provider basic available information essential to the child’s safety and welfare to the out-of-home provider but not before the placement was made; or **the timeliness cannot be determined.**
- If initial or annual health, mental health, or dental assessments were conducted late.

- If further treatment was indicated but not initiated within the 30 days or as recommended; or there was a need for more than one type of additional medical, mental health, or dental care and some but not all were initiated. (Initiated means that a call is made and an appointment scheduled within 30 days. The appointment, itself, does not have to be within 30 days.)
- If there is a current Child and Family Plan in the file but it is incomplete (has a OH02 but is missing other sections) or late but still within the review period.
- If the Child and Family Plan is the initial plan and was completed but not within 45 days after the child entered temporary custody (shelter hearing date).
- If the worker initiated some but not all of the services for the child and family as identified in the Child and Family Plan.
- If the child was provided the opportunity to visit his/her parents but not weekly; or if he/she was given the opportunity to visit only one parent.
- If the child was provided the opportunity to visit his/her siblings but not twice monthly (or once a month if over two hours travel time); or if the child was provided the opportunity to visit some of his/her siblings but not all of them.

I hope this gives you an idea of what the Case Process Review is looking for. If you have questions please send me an email. I would love to clarify things further. Many of the partials we receive could be “yes” if there was documentation in the activity logs. Others could be “yes” if we just got them done a day or two sooner or signed the Child and Family Plan and had the supervisor sign it.

And please keep up the good work. You guys are terrific!

## Your Progress Is Being Recognized!

*By Richard Anderson*

This last weekend, headlines in two newspapers with the largest distribution in the state read, **“Review Sites Progress Within DCFS”** and **“DCFS is Improving Despite Stigma.”** Our efforts to move forward on the many high goals for the agency are being recognized. The articles were even better than the headlines as they showed a true understanding of what we are accomplishing. When I sit down and talk with someone who is not aware of all of the requirements and explain what we are in the midst of, they are often amazed that any organization could hold up under such demands. Well, it just goes to show that we can do it, but it is not without difficulty and continual adjustments. Most of all, this progress is happening because of the remarkable commitment that all of you make to those we serve.

The news articles were in response to the release of the “Department of Human Services, Office of Services Review, Fiscal Year 2002 Report”. Copies of these were sent to the regions. The report will also be posted on the web at [www.hso.sr.utah.gov](http://www.hso.sr.utah.gov). This Annual Report showed that we are making progress on most of the areas of our performance. One of the comments I was quoted having said, and I did, is that sometimes it feels like the child who is given a bad time for not getting straight A's. We have so many targets where we are required to hit bull's eyes. Sometimes we get

close, some times we are far off and some-times we just run out of arrows because there are too many targets and not enough support.

Well, the most important information is that we are making good progress in many critical areas of our services. I realize this is happening at a time when you are really stretched to meet the requirements. (In an upcoming article in the UPDATE you will see that the recent Legislative Audit verified that for almost half of our caseworkers there is not enough time to do all that is required.)

Across all the measures, the safety of children is being met and more services are being delivered. Here are some highlights of the Case Process Review portion of the annual report from the Office of Services Review:

Successes:

- Majority of the areas in the Case Process Reviews improved over last year.
- More services to families.
- Unaccepted referral scores met or exceed the goals.
- Service providers are met with more often (home visits at highest levels ever).
- Significant increases in visits to children.

Areas for Improvement:

- Main reason for decreased scores from 2001 to 2002 was inadequate documentation (interesting, the Legislative Audit said this is where we spent most of our time).
- Incomplete interviews through not interviewing third parties with information about the allegations (decreased from 81% to 71%).
- Home-based service plans were not as timely as last year.

We are making progress, even though it seems that when several areas go up we have a few that go down.

We are making progress and your efforts are paying off in better quality and more services to children and families. We will be working with you to get better focus by removing barriers and additional workload that may not be helping us to reach our goals.

THANKS TO ALL OF YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUING EFFORTS TO HELP BUILD THE BEST CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM.

ALSO, TO OUR PARTNERS THAT MAY READ THIS ARTICLE, WE ARE FULLY AWARE THAT THESE IMPROVEMENTS HAPPEN WHEN THE ENTIRE SYSTEM WORKS TOGETHER. THANK YOU SINCERELY FOR YOUR ADDITIONAL EFFORTS AND CONTINUAL SUPPORT.

# Explanation Of The QCR Flow

*By Linda Winingar*

In the past few months I've had the opportunity to help prepare two regions for the Qualitative Case Review (QCR). I've stumbled upon some interesting ideas, and I wanted to share them with you with the hope that they will help us to discover what we are missing and how to get over the hump into the land of "Best Practice."

First, I'd like to share some practices I've seen that may help supervisors and caseworkers fit everything together—or simply start on the road to what we are looking for. In Castledale, I saw a practice that really caught my eye. The cases reviewed there had great functional assessments that were easily read and evaluated. Here is one of the tricks they were using. When any kind of activity happened that might expose more information than could be included in the assessment such as a mental health assessment, an interview with the child or another family member, a child and family team meeting, a health care assessment, etc., information was gleaned from that activity and added to the functional assessment under the heading that pertained. For example, if in a child and family team meeting the teacher stated that the child was excelling in math, that information could be added to the functional assessment under the appropriate heading. Now here is the clincher. After the statement the worker added a reference in parentheses. This allowed me, as the reviewer, to see that the worker was gathering information from various formal and informal assessments to add to the functional assessment, and it also showed me that the assessment was a living, growing document. It was exciting to see such a useful approach.

I also saw another practice in the Northern Region that was exciting and can perhaps be used to a greater extent. When the cases were pulled for the QCR, the Milestone Coordinator had several of the certified reviewers in that region divide up the cases and meet with the worker and supervisor. The purpose of the meeting was to help the worker to understand what they could expect from the review. This same process could easily be used by supervisors to give them an idea of how well a caseworker is incorporating the Practice Model into their work and where there is a need for more training or mentoring.

I had volunteered to help in the Northern Region and so met with six of the caseworkers and their supervisors. As I met with them I explained the process and then went through the QCR protocol discussing how they thought their case would fair on each of the areas. This discussion had an interesting side benefit. When I got to the System Performance area I realized that it was easier to explain what we were looking for when we rated the areas—in other words the flow of the work we were hoping to see.

Here is what I told them:

We are looking to see that when a family comes into our purview—Is an initial assessment made to determine the needs of the child and the family? This should begin, ideally, during the CPS case before the decision is made to open an additional

case with this family. This basic assessment should then be passed on to the continuing worker along with the beginnings of a child and family team. The beginnings of the child and family team are especially important if the child needed to be removed from the home as it can help to identify kinship placements. We are then looking for the formation of a more concrete team with the family having a good deal of input as to who is on that team. The team then begins meeting, gathering information about the family from each of the team members, and adding to the functional assessment (with reference as to where that information came from). Team meetings are then held when issues come up that can be addressed by the team. These meetings can be regularly scheduled in advanced or called at the spur of the moment. Any member of the team can call a child and family meeting. For example, if the teacher is worried about a child's performance in school she can call the caseworker and express her concern. The caseworker can call the parent and suggest that a team meeting would be helpful. The meeting is then organized by the caseworker, the parent, and the teacher, including as many members of the team as possible. At the meeting the teacher might suggest that the child needs some extra reading time at home. Perhaps that is easily taken care of by the kinship provider but perhaps not. However, if the aunt, who takes care of the child after school is at the meeting, she may volunteer to read with the child everyday after school. This need would then be added to the functional assessment.

The functional assessment with its identified strengths and needs is then used to develop the child and family plan. Underlying needs are transferred to the child and family plan as goals or objectives with steps to be taken to implement the plan and achieve the goals. Responsible persons or applicable resources are identified with target dates and expected changes. The child and family plan is thus created by the team. The child and family plan includes a look at the next expected transition in the child's life and the long-term view for the family. It spells out the steps that will be taken to make a transition as smooth as possible for a child and their family, and it addresses the long-term needs of the family so that the likelihood that the family will come back into our care is greatly reduced.

Finally, there is tracking and adaptation that ensures that the goals and objectives of the child and family plan are relevant and help the family move toward a safe and nurturing environment for their children without Child and Family Services involvement.

That's the flow we're looking for. I hope this explanation helps. If you have any questions at all, please send me an email at [LSWININGER@utah.gov](mailto:LSWININGER@utah.gov). I would love to go into more detail if needed.

# "The Red Shoe"

## **Utilizing Our Education Partners**

*By LeRoy Franke*

Some of you know that Lorna, my wife, is an elementary school principal in Davis School District, making my partnership with education somewhat unique. Our conversations have been interesting, and unfortunately not always positive, in terms of her past experiences with Child and Family Services.

She reports that things have been changing, and, for the most part, she sees more responsiveness from Child and Family Services to the CPS referrals from her school. Child and Family Services staff has also better explained the role of the agency and our limitations, which has helped the school to make more appropriate referrals. Additionally, she has experienced more community teaming with Child and Family Services through FACT and other community teams, which has increased their understanding of and commitment to prevention, such as referrals to the Family Support Center.

Lorna has made a point to me that teachers know their children extremely well. They spend more waking hours with them than their parents do. They conduct ongoing assessments in a number of educational and behavioral areas. They are attuned to the children's moods and personal issues, which can help immeasurably in developing our functional assessments and Child and Family Team Plans. They can also give valuable information as to how the children are actually progressing. For the most part, teachers and school counselors are eager to participate when invited as a member of a Child and Family Team. She pointed out that scheduling team meetings when teachers can attend would help facilitate their participation.

My own experience with educators during the regional reviews has also been positive, with them having a great deal of information to share about the children they serve. They uniformly expressed a desire to participate on the teams, and were often disappointed when not invited.

I think educators are also becoming far better trained and expert in the Practice Model Principles we are striving to implement within Child and Family Services. The excerpts from the following story provide an example. It is found in the September 2000 Volume of the Educational Leadership Magazine of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. This article on page 74, entitled "The Red Shoe" was written by Linda Webb, Principal of Pillow Elementary School in Austin, Texas. See if you can identify the Child and Family Services Practice Model Principle(s) she is teaching educators.



## The Red Shoe

*By Linda Webb*

Growing up the youngest of three children, I was adored by my grandmother, favored by my sister, and protected by my big brother. My parents' decision that my mother would put her teaching career on hold during my preschool days allowed me to enjoy a Beaver Cleaver lifestyle, complete with nurturing support and warm cookies.

Soon it was time for me to leave the security of my daily home life and embark on my school career. Before starting kindergarten, I carefully chose a flower-covered lunch box and asked whether I had to get glasses in order to read. (Grown-ups always needed to find their glasses to read.) The night before the Big Day, giggling in the darkness long past our bedtime my sister shared her seven years of worldly advice on how to succeed in school.

Long after my sister drifted into dreamland, I tossed and turned with visions of the wonderland of school. Too excited to sleep, I sneaked into the kitchen for some cookies. Mother was there preparing for her own return to the classroom, and she smiled when she saw me peek around the corner, pushed her papers aside, and took me into her lap. I asked her about kindergarten for about the 500<sup>th</sup> time that day. She assured me ~~that~~ I would enjoy myself and that the teacher would love having such a sweet little angel in her room.

The next day, the long-anticipated walk to school seemed endless, but when I arrived at the door of Ms. Hancock's room, I saw my name on the door. Ms. Hancock had been waiting for me, just as I had been waiting for her. As the day progressed, Ms. Hancock showed us a star chart. The student's job was to fill up the star chart, she said, with stars earned for demonstrating the ability to count to 100, to identify colors, and to tie a shoe, among others. I was excited because I could already do most of these activities. Every day we had a chance to show our classmates what we had mastered and were given a star- **in front of everyone.**

One afternoon, Ms. Hancock brought out a red wooden shoe and asked, "Who would like to earn a star for tying the shoe today?" My hand rocketed up, and my heart pounded with joy when she chose me. I pranced to the front of the room, took one lace, pinched it together to make a loop, and manipulated the other lace around the loop. I bent down and grabbed the shoelace with my teeth to pull it through the loop.

"Nasty girl! What would your mother think of you putting that in your mouth?" bellowed Ms. Hancock. I had no answer. Emotionally shocked and ashamed, I silently retreated to the far end of the carpet and slumped to the floor.

As I tried to make myself as small as possible, Ms. Hancock's ramblings about the filthy hands that had touched the laces and about never putting objects in your mouth became unintelligible to me. "Nasty girl" were the only words circulating in my mind, like a tornado gaining strength with nowhere to land. How could I tell my mother that her angel was a nasty girl? How could I explain something I didn't understand? Unable to answer these questions, I chose to hide my nastiness from my family. I still had a problem with the star chart because I had to accumulate all my stars to reach first grade, I thought.

When I looked at the star chart, I never saw the accumulated gold stars. The one blank square, four places from the left, that screamed NASTY GIRL claimed my focus. During the last week of school, I knew that I would fail kindergarten, and that everyone would discover my nastiness. At home, I grabbed Teddy, the only creature to whom I had confided my nastiness, and cried as though my heart would break. My big brother entered my room to ask what was wrong. I explained through sobs that I couldn't tie my shoes. "Your shoes are tied, silly goose," he said. Through gulps of air, I managed to utter "school" and "no star." My brother gently asked, "Did you tie your shoes at school the way Mother ties shoes?" Of course! How else would I tie them? Then my brother quietly explained to me that there were certain things we did only in our home. These things were not bad, but the other people might misunderstand them.

That afternoon, my brother taught me to tie my shoes with my hands. You see, my mother was born without hands, and I had learned to tie my shoes by watching her lovingly tie my sister's shoes and mine. I went to school the next day, tied my shoes "Ms. Hancock's way," and got my star. The illumination of that star still shines throughout my life and guides my teaching philosophy. Confronted with something she didn't understand, Ms. Hancock passed judgment on the basis of a limited understanding. She never asked or tried to understand why I tied my shoe differently. To her, *different* was nasty. Through our personal, ignorant judgments of children, we educators can unconsciously, but permanently, clip the innocent wings of angels.

...I graduated from kindergarten realizing that I should never judge others solely on the basis of my viewpoint of a situation. To discover the real meaning behind others' actions, I must allow others to shine their perspectives on the situation. Doing so sometimes allows me to see a rainbow in what appear to be dark and stormy skies. How sad it would be to go through life thinking there is only one way to tie a shoe!

As an educator I try not to prejudge children or their families. I've incorporated into my teaching philosophy the silent and wondering question, "Why is this student engaging in 'unacceptable' behavior?" This simple question often gives me great insight into that child.

...Recently I moved from teaching into administration. I realize that my moral dilemma concerning choosing between guidelines and the needs of students will grow more intense. Enforcing the rules is one of the key responsibilities of an administrator, but I will not abandon my beliefs about looking first at students' needs.

While visiting my mother recently, I shared with her my hope that I will never get mired in the bureaucracy of my new job and forget why I chose to be an administrator. Upon my departure, my mother gave me a gift for my new office: an old red wooden shoe with a dirty shoelace.